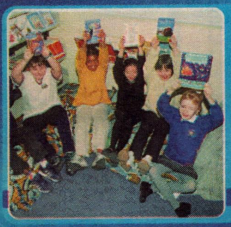
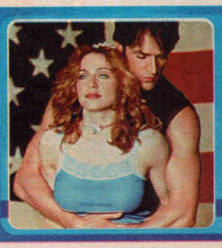
THE FUNDAY TIMES



Your verdict
Funday listens to what some of you think about Free Books For Schools
Page 5

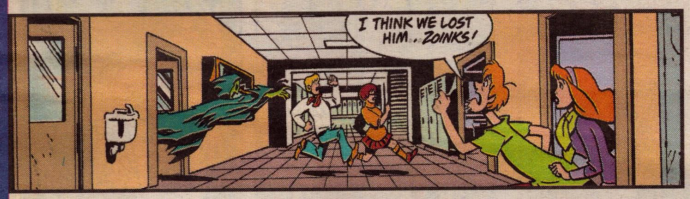
Star stepping
Steps' H and Claire take us behind the scenes of their new TV talent show
Page 6

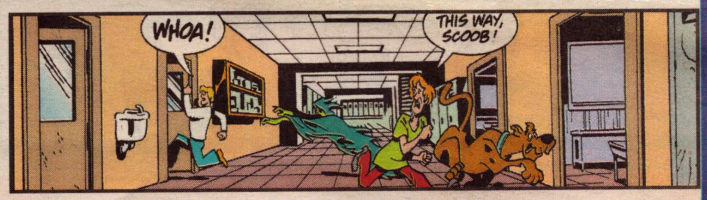


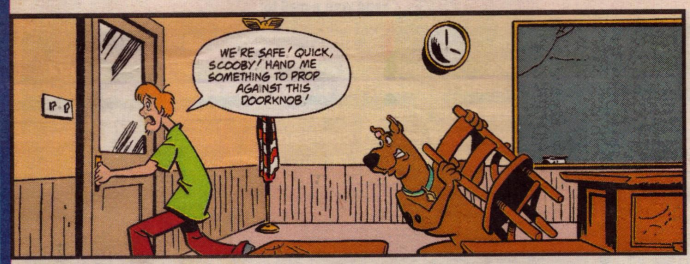
Madge returns
Funday Buzz tastes a chunky slice of Madonna's new American Pie single
Page 9

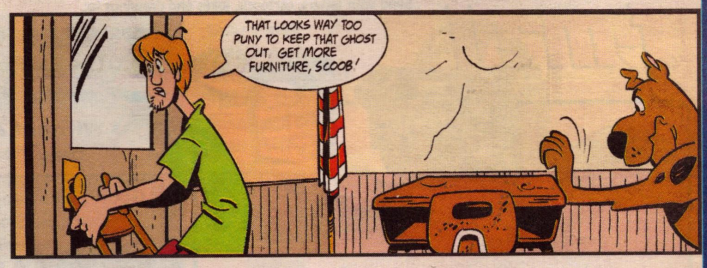
SCOOBY-DOO! in HIGH SCHOOL GHOUL

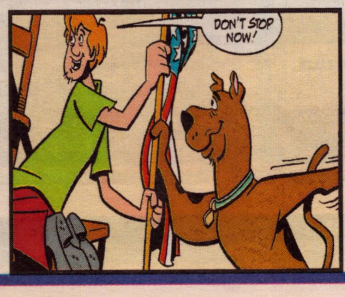
The story so far – The gang are finding that revealing the identity of the phantom ghost is as tough as school dinners!



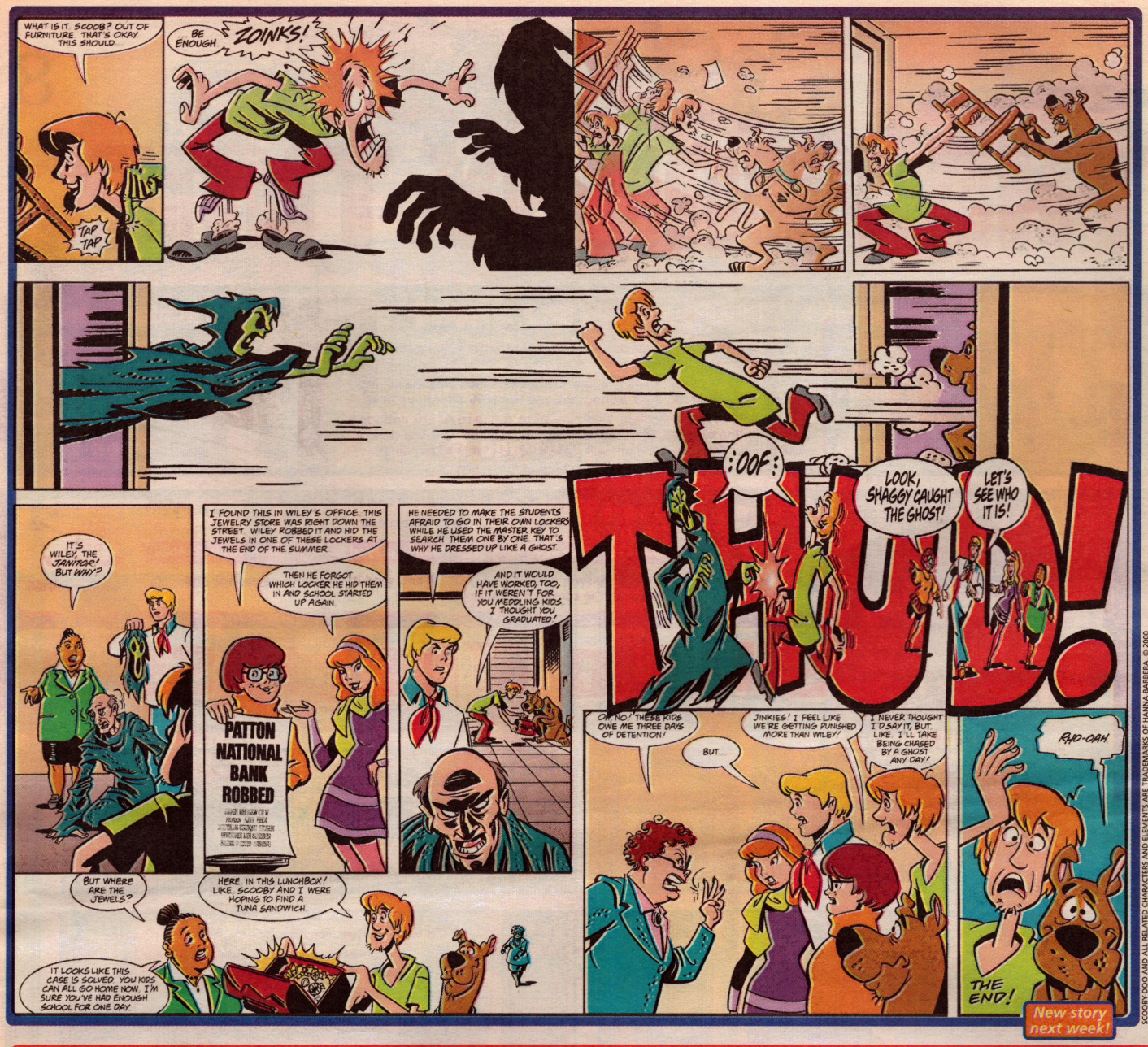








More inside



SCOOBY DOO AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS AND ELEMENTS ARE TRADEMARKS OF HANNA BARBERA © 2000

f-mail

Send your letters, cartoons, jokes and drawings to: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU7 7GX Send your e-mail to: funday.times@sunday-times.co.uk

FLASH CAMERA

This fantastic Fujifilm Instax 100 instant camera will help you become a real super snapper!
You can take fun photos of your friends and family and see the results in just seconds.
The Instax 100 (£24.99) is really easy to use – just point the camera, press the button and impress everyone with your talent at taking photos!
The star f-mail will get a Fujifilm Instax 100 with five packs of film. Each runner-up gets a camera and a single pack of film.

STAR

The Long Walk
Miss D Buss

Without A Belt
Drew P Drores

Geology For Beginners
Roxanne Stones

How To Be A Punk
Spike E Hairdo

The Stolen Chestnut
Nick McConker

Ghayathri Balendran, 12, via e-mail

Dear f-mail,
I have recently joined a club at my school called Amnesty. Until I joined, I had no idea of the suffering that some people in the world have to go through. I was shocked that governments in places like Mexico weren't doing anything about issues such as children being put in adult prisons for stealing something as trivial as a loaf of bread. While there, they are beaten up by the guards and other prisoners. In some parts of the world, boys aged 15 are being forced to join the army and do dangerous work that is meant for people of at least 20 years of age. Also, refugees are forced to live in appalling conditions when they flee their home country. These are just a few examples of the terrible things many people have to suffer. If you want to help out, visit the Amnesty International website on www.amnesty.org.uk. I expect that I am not the only one who wants to help.
Ellie Buchdahl, 11, via e-mail

Get snapping with Funday's fantastic new f-mail prizes!

FUN Competitions!

COMPETITION ADDRESS Send answers to all competitions to us at: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU7 7GX. Competition deadline: February 23
You can e-mail your competition answers to: funday.competitions@sunday-times.co.uk

WEMBLEY WA-HEY!

Details of Wembley tours are available on 020-8795 8090 or at www.wembleynationalstadium.com

You could be on the road to Wembley, if you win our fantastic competition!

It's the world's most famous stadium and standing on its hallowed turf is the dream of every footballer.

Wembley has also hosted every major world event including the Olympic Games, Live Aid, Madonna's world tours and the 1966 World Cup final.

You can now tour the stadium, climb the steps to the royal box and see a vast exhibition of sport memorabilia. And this could be your last chance, since the old Wembley Stadium will close its gates for the final time in August as construction of the new stadium gets underway.

On March 1, our two winners and their guardians will get a special tour, with a top Premier League footballer as their guide, and take home a great souvenir goodie bag.

Plus, 10 runners-up get a pair of family tickets each.

To enter, tell us in which year Wembley played host to the Olympic Games.

Mark your answer WEMBLEY STADIUM and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address above.

WEMBLEY Stadium Tours Coca-Cola

SHOP OF THE CLASS

Our winner will be given full marks if they win a high-tech computer for their school!

Tesco Computers for Schools has so far donated an incredible 38,700 computers to more than 20,000 schools. And, between now and April 9 you can pick up a computer equipment voucher at every store when your bill comes to £10 or more.

Tesco and education computer supplier RM will make one winner a real class act when they get a great Hitachi Camcorder for themselves, and an RM PC for their school.

Plus, five runners-up get a Hitachi cassette recorder.

To win, name a current EastEnder who was a former Grange Hill School pupil.

Mark your answer TESCO and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address above.

Tesco Computers for Schools 2000

Normal TNL competition rules apply to all Funday Times competitions

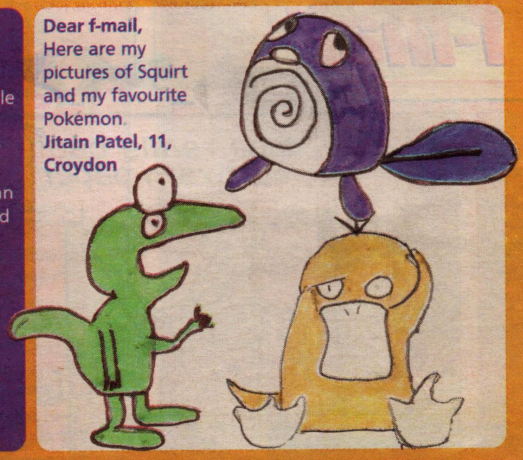
Rachel Scott, 10, Callander

How do fish travel around the seabed?

They catch the octo-bus!

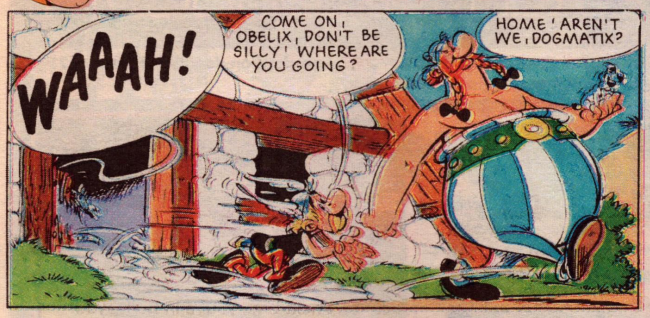
Dear f-mail,
I think that just a few people are making a lot of fuss about the Millennium Dome. For most people in Cornwall, and other far-flung places, it doesn't matter what the dome is like because we won't be going. It would take me more than six hours to get there by train, and cost a fortune before I even arrived at Greenwich. I think that the money spent on the dome should have been distributed around the regions so that more people could commemorate the new millennium in a way that means something to them.
Andrew Smith, 14, Padstow

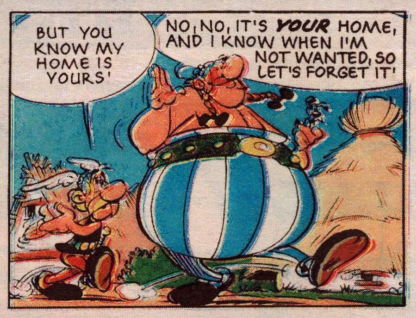
Dear f-mail,
Here are my pictures of Squirt and my favourite Pokemon.
Jitain Patel, 11, Croydon

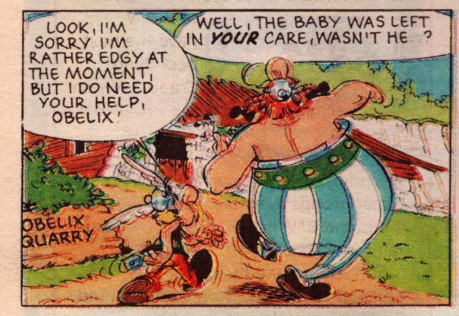


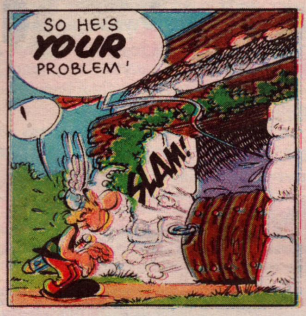
Asterix and Son

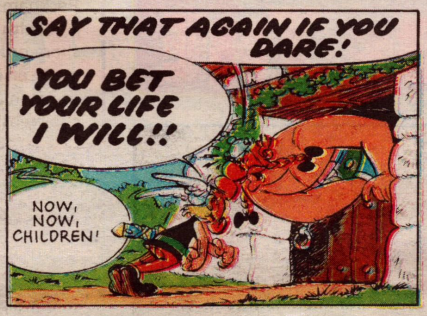
© 2000 LES ÉDITIONS ALBERT RENÉ/GOSCINNY-UDERZO

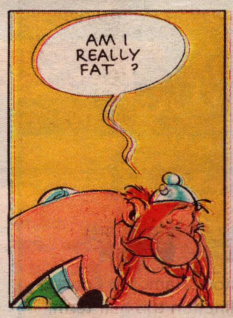












Continued next week!

DAGSY DOG

My sister's cat and my mum's dog are always fighting each other. Jake the dog is now really scared of Jasper the cat. I'd really like them to get along together.
Polly Anna

In cartoons, the terrified cat always flees from the dog up the nearest tree. In real life, the opposite is quite often true. Dogs that make the mistake of cornering a cat soon discover that they possess sharp claws and teeth which the cat is prepared to use. Dogs soon learn then to give their housemate a bit of respect.

I have two guinea pigs. They both have notches at the edge of their ears. What are these and what do they do?
Katherine Legh, Derbyshire

Most guinea pigs have natural folds or kinks on the edge of their ears which look a bit like the petals on a rose. Their ears do also sometimes get torn, usually through accidents or fights over food with the other animals in their cage. If food fights are to blame then put more food bowls in the cage.

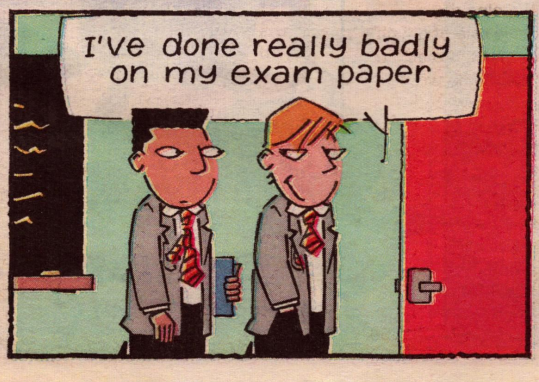
Answers by Catherine Morganti

If you have a question for me or you want to send in a cool fact, write to:
The Funday Times, Dagsy Dog, PO Box 495, London E1 9XW

The Blue Cross, one of Britain's largest animal welfare charities, has three animal hospitals, two veterinary clinics, 11 adoption centres and two equine centres nationally. Last year the charity found homes for more than 8,000 animals and treated more than 60,000 pets at its hospitals.

ILLUSTRATIONS: PAUL CEMMICK

Jarvis



©KNIGHT FEATURES

Asterix's adventure continues next week!

NEWS

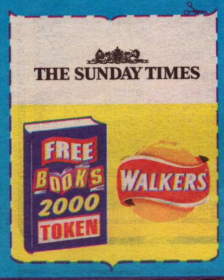
Keep munching

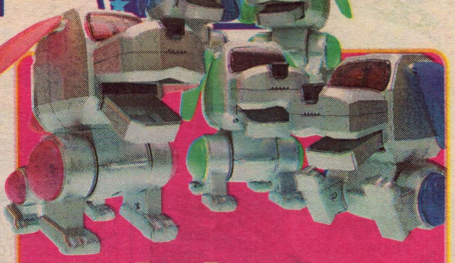
As well as cutting out the tokens in The Funday Times, our readers have also been munching their way through crisps galore to take part in the Free Books For Schools 2000 campaign! Nine out of ten UK schools are now taking part, including the pupils at Melcombe Primary School in London. "We've been eating loads of crisps to get the tokens," admits nine-year-old Shalomi Anderson. "My nan buys two big packets of crisps and we just eat them all the time. My brother keeps the tokens – I give them to him to cut out." Munching her favourite snack means Joanne Elliot, also aged nine, has collected extra tokens. "I've been saving loads of tokens at home because with Quavers, you get two tokens and I love them," she says. "I really liked Little Wolf's Book Of Badness by Ian Whybrow. It's really funny, it even made my dad laugh."

Lee Tuvey, 11, has just finished reading another of the books in the campaign – and he gives it top marks! "I read TH White's The Sword In The Stone. It's a book about magic and it's really good – I'd give it 10 out of 10," he says.

How you can get collecting

Simply cut out the token below, and you can help your school get great free books. Plus, there are four more tokens in today's Culture section of The Sunday Times. Until the beginning of April there will be Free Books For Schools tokens in The Sunday Times and the News of the World every week, PLUS a token in every copy of The Times and The Sun. There are also tokens on special packs of Walkers crisps, Walkers Lites, Max, Monster Munch, Cheetos, Doritos and 3Ds. Plus, there are DOUBLE tokens on Walkers French Fries and Quavers. Collect the tokens and give them to your teacher, who can swap them for free books. Call the helpline on 0845 60 40 312 for further details.





Robot rover

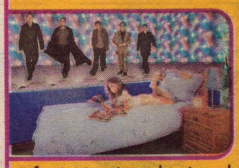
This space-aged spaniel could be the answer for pet-lovers who haven't got time to look after a real four-legged friend. Created by Dreamcast maker Sega, Poo-Chi is a robot puppy that responds to light, touch and sound. It's just 18cm tall but Poo-Chi is a techno-toy with a big heart – when you pat it on the head, heart shapes light up in its eyes! Funday predicts that when Poo-Chi goes on sale in July, it will become one of the biggest toy crazes of the year. Bow wow!

Purrfect make-over

You can go wild at historic Hampton Court and have some fab feline fun this half term. All The King's Creatures is a nine-day extravaganza celebrating the role of animals in Tudor England. The fun leaps into action on February 19, and involves some weird and wonderful beasts, including dragons and unicorns! Highlights include demonstrations of the Tudor art of falconry and a monster hunt in Hampton Court's famous maze. There are half-price vouchers for selected performances of Cats up for grabs (one for every paying adult), and stars from the musical will be on hand all week to paint your face. You can even take home a free face-painting kit to try out your new skills! Details are available on 020-8781 9500.

Wall of fame

You don't just have to dream about being in the front row of a Boyzone concert next time you're in bed – you can now have the next best thing! Create-a-Vision has unveiled a range of wallpaper featuring top chart and football stars. Other groups available include Westlife, Steps and B*Witched. If you're a footie fan, you can choose the Arsenal or Manchester United team, or even the England squad. So, Shearer, Owen and Beckham can play on your bedroom wall with thousands of fans cheering them on! Plus, the players and pop stars can be peeled off and repositioned as often as you like! For details, visit the website www.create-a-vision.com



You must be joking!

Millions of people in India are discovering how a chortle a day keeps the doctor at bay. Every morning, groups – nicknamed Laughter Clubs – meet for 60 minutes of mirth. It all started after a doctor claimed starting the day with a laugh can boost your health, and help you to work harder. Clubs have now sprung up in their thousands – Bombay alone boasts 57. "It's wonderful exercise for the abdomen and relaxes the mind and body," says Dr Madan Kataria, who created the first club. "You just force yourself to laugh, make eye contact with other people – and the laughter just comes. Try it!"

PICTURES: CROWN COPYRIGHT HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES, REUTERS, JAMIE HUGHES

STEPPING OUT

Friday saw the launch of CBBC's Steps To The Stars, presented by those funky Stepsters themselves, Claire and H. Paul Wray went behind the scenes of the new TV talent show that's just for youngsters!

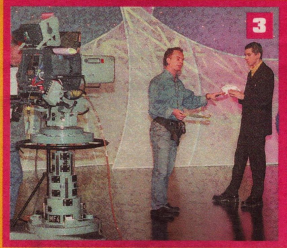
1

Steps To The Stars is filmed at the BBC studios in Manchester, and that's where we find Claire and H, preparing for the long day of filming. But where are Faye, Lee and Lisa? "They're on holiday," reveals Claire. "It's weird not having everyone here but, since we're presenting, it's OK. If we'd been singing on our own, that would have been really strange!" "Yeah, I usually have four people to bounce off but now I'm stuck with her!" laughs H.

Three acts will test their talents in front of the cameras and a live studio audience today: Jo's Rainbow – a cheerleading troop from Cardiff, magician Jez Rose and singer Maria Miele.

2

Jo's Rainbow will be the first act to perform. "We've been here since 8.45am rehearsing our moves and getting all of our costumes ready," says nine-year-old Gabby Langmead. "And then there's make-up, which takes ages – especially when there are 15 of us altogether!"



3

Next, is magician Jez Rose, 15, from Buckinghamshire, who is running through one of his card tricks. The floor manager helps Jez position his handful of cards for the camera.

4

It's not just the acts who have to rehearse, Claire and H are put through their paces as well – and we are not talking about one of Steps' dance routines! "It's going very well," whispers Claire during a quick break. "Yeah!" butts in H, "I'm surprised at the talent we've got on today's show, it's fantastic!"

5

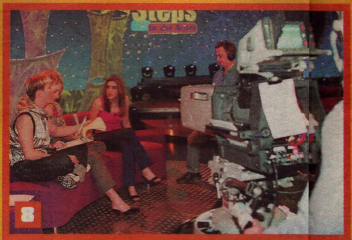
While Claire and H are filming their links, the final star-to-bee, Maria Miele, is busy having her make-up applied. So, what's her big song? "I Will Always Love You by Whitney Houston. I heard it in the film The Bodyguard and loved it," explains Maria. "But I didn't know how hard the song was until I started singing it!"

6

It's lunchtime, and the floor is swept quickly before the cameras roll for the first time. Claire and H then record short interviews with each of the acts. These will be shown between the performances on the finished programme.

7

Maria manages to get a break, but Funday grabs her for a quick chat! "I've just been interviewed for Electric Circus and Emma Ledden was lovely," says Maria. "I'm nervous because there's a really high note right at the end of my song and it's tough to hit it and get the pitch right."



8

Maria sits on the couch for a chat with Claire and H. The only problem is that Claire can't stop laughing. "Oh you've come at the right time! There haven't been any mishaps so far, apart from today," pouts Claire. "I couldn't say one thing just now because I got a fit of the giggles."

9

While Claire fluffs her lines, H is the picture of concentration!

10

When H spots fellow Welsh performers, Jo's Rainbow, he's straight off to join them. "We were the only act from Wales out of 2,000 entries, so we're proud of ourselves for getting this far," says Joanna Webb.

11

Eeek! It is nearly show-time and so the members of the audience take their seats.

12

Backstage, Jez is busy making final preparations to his Worms trick. "There are three different lengths of rope that I magic in to one," he reveals.

13

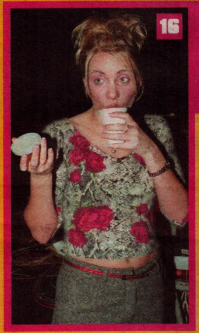
At the last minute, Emma Ledden drops in to interview H about Steps To The Stars for Electric Circus. H is his usually crazy self for the cameras!

14

It's time for the proper show, and the cameras begin to roll! Jo's Rainbow kick off with three minutes of rip-roaring, high-kicking pom-pom thrusting that leaves both the audience, and the performers, breathless.

15

Things are a lot less strenuous in the Green Room, where parents and friends nervously watch the TV monitors that reveal what is happening in the studio.



16

A quick break in filming means a coffee for Claire. "We're filming until 7pm and then we've got a photo-shoot. We are used to working long days – it's part and parcel of the job now, but it doesn't make it any easier!" she whines.

17

Back on set, Claire's next job is as Jez's assistant, while he baffles everyone with a vanishing card trick. "As a member of the Magic Circle I can't reveal how any of my tricks are done," Jez insists, as Claire begs for inside information.

18

After a breathtaking performance from Maria, the audience depart and H strolls back to his dressing room for some rest and relaxation. "I wish there had been something like Steps To The Stars when I was a kid. The professionalism of all the acts is so high," the Steps star enthuses.

Steps To The Stars is on CBBC each Friday at 4.30pm. This show, featuring Jez Rose, Jo's Rainbow and Maria Miele, will be shown on March 10.

PICTURES: JAMIE HUGHES

BERYL the PERIL

BERYL THE PERIL APPEARS EVERY WEEK IN The DANDY

868 869 870

VANDAL! YOU'RE RUINING THE CHAIR!

YOU DO NOT PLAY LIKE THAT INSIDE THE HOUSE. THE HOUSE IS ONLY FOR HARMLESS GAMES, LIKE LUDO AND SNAKES AND LADDERS.

OH, BY THE WAY, DAD, THAT LIGHT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE WORKING.

HMM! I'LL TAKE A LOOK AT IT.

SEEMS OKAY TO ME!

LOOK OUT, DAD!

BERYL! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE PLAYING AT?

HO! HO! SNAKES AND LADDERS!

PAH! WHAT A PERIL OF A GIRL.

WAAH-H!

SORRY, DAD. I WAS PLAYING AT PINNING-THE-TAIL-ON-THE-DONKEY. DON'T KNOW HOW I GOT YOU INSTEAD OF THE DONKEY.

I MUST RELAX. I'LL READ THE PAPER.

HEY, DAD! IS THIS HOW TO PLAY DRAUGHTS?

MMPH!

MMPH!

LATER, OUTSIDE—

SHOP-FITTERS & SIGN MAKERS

HA! THIS IS THE PLACE.

SHE SEEMS TO HAVE GONE OUT SOMEWHERE. THANK GOODNESS.

HEAVE!

6

CLONK!

I'M GOING TO PLAY LUDO, DAD. THE RULES SAY YOU'VE GOT TO THROW A SIX TO START.

LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT A GAME I'VE BEEN PLAYING, BERYL. IT'S CALLED PATIENCE AND SNAP AND NOW . . .

. . . MY PATIENCE HAS SNAPPED!

GULP! I DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY HIDE AND SEEK!

© D.C. THOMSON & CO., LTD., 2000

Oh dear, poor Beryl seems to be on a losing streak!

FUNDAY

BUZZ!

Life on the bus!

Blaque Ivory are having a fab time at the moment – they're on tour with TLC in America. We caught up with Shamari last week on the band's tour bus.

So, where are you at the moment?
We're driving to Boston from New York and it's quite scary because it's snowing today. There's a big snow storm going on outside.

Don't you get on top of each other?
No, everyone is cool. We just relax and sleep as much as we can, because being on the bus is the only time we get to sleep. Sometimes we watch movies as well.

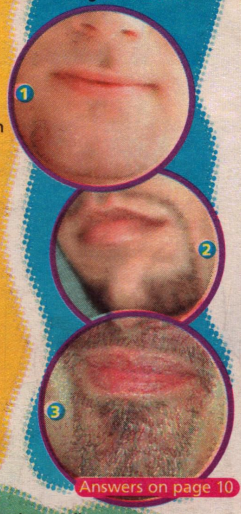
When are you next coming to the UK?
We're coming at the end of this month, and I can't wait to do do some shopping. Last time we came to London we didn't get time.

Is there anything you don't like here?
The food. It tastes different to food here, nothing tastes the same. When I asked for lemonade they gave me Sprite, not freshly-squeezed lemons!

The new single, Bring It All To Me, is a duet with 'NSYNC. What were they like to work with?
Oh, they're excellent guys. We were on tour with them last year and it was amazing. We hung out with them and now they're like our big brothers.

Fuzzy face

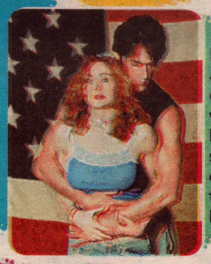
See if you can identify these top pop chaps from their goatee beards!



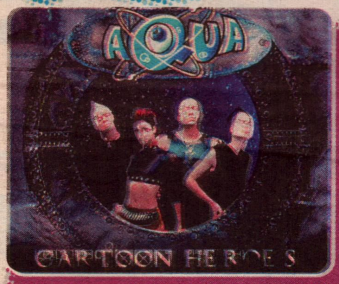
Answers on page 10

We're not Fierce!

Fierce are celebrating another smash-hit with their latest single, Sweet Love, riding high in the UK charts. But, even though the girls are now become a regular fixture in the charts, they still find they need to explain their name! "Because we're called Fierce, people who have never met the band always think we're going to be mean and confrontational," admits Chantal Alleyne. "They expect us to be feisty and rude, but we're actually the opposite," she giggles. "The 'f' in our name stands for fun and we actually got it from a friend who used to do our hair. She used to say 'you look fierce', which is American slang and it means cool." The girls recently supported Whitney Houston at Wembley and Chantal says the experience was amazing. "It was like a dream come true," she recalls. "I have always admired Whitney, and we found out that she actually asked for us to do it." Chantal says that Fierce love to perform at concerts because they all enjoy singing live. "We're one of the only groups around that always sings live," she says. "Of course dancing and singing at the same time takes quite a lot of practice, but we're quite used to it now. Although, we do still end up panting at the end of every song!"



Madonna's new single, American Pie, isn't actually new at all. It was first a hit nearly 30 years ago for an American singer called Don McLean. The original song was eight minutes long and, when Don first wrote it, he decided to perform a live rendition before he had actually learned all the words. So, Don walked on stage with a song-sheet and asked a member of the audience to come up on stage and hold the words for him! Madonna has cut three-and-a-half of Don's six verses for her version. So, it shouldn't be as hard for Madge to learn the words!



The heroes return!

Cartoon Heroes, the new single from Aqua, marks the long-awaited return of one of pop's most successful groups. Funday Buzz met Lene, Søren, René and Claus this week, to find out what they have been up to since their last chart hit, more than a year ago!

Why did you decide to take a year off from the world of pop?
Søren: We tried to write songs for our second album while we were promoting the first one, Aquarium, but you need total relaxation.
Lene: Also to care for ourselves as well. When we stopped, we had all had it up to here. It's much healthier for a band to take a break if they want to stick around.
René: When you're away from home for such a long time, touring, you don't know what your friends are doing and that can cause problems. And, by taking a break, we really managed to recapture the old team spirit.

What was the first thing you did once you'd decided to take the break?
Lene: It was really strange. It's a bit scary suddenly changing your life like that. I wasn't sure what to do first.
René: And it's really hard to just stop, so some of us kept on travelling for a while. At first, I found I got more stressed from the relaxing than I had from the hard work we'd been doing before.
Søren: Then we started writing and producing new material.

What does the new album, Aquarius, sound like?
Claus: The first single, Cartoon Heroes, is a good taster of the rest of the album. It's all a bit tongue in cheek and it's a good development. It takes Aqua to the next step without losing what we are about.

How does Aquarius differ from your first album, Aquarium?
Søren: The whole sound is very different.
Claus: And using strings was something we had always wanted to do. We used an orchestra on Aquarius, and it was a huge, huge experience.
René: There were 20 people playing our music and it brought tears to my eyes!

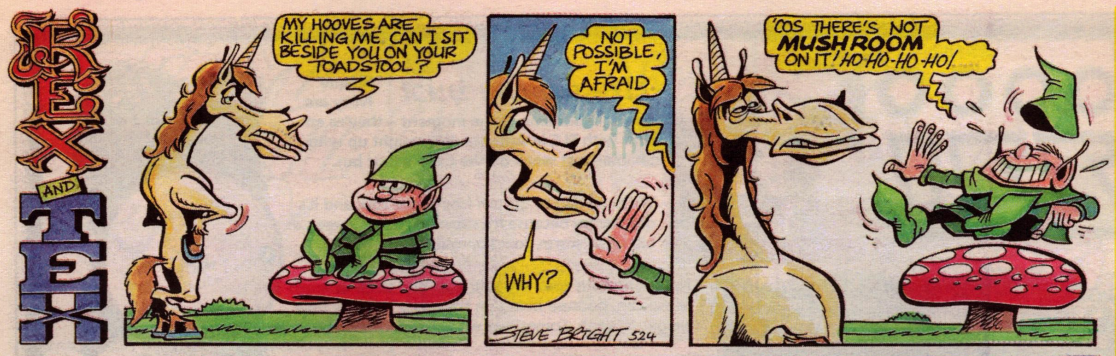
Where did you record it and how long did it take?
Lene: In total, it took one year and two months. We rehearsed in Sweden and then we came to Somerset to record it.
Søren: We wanted to get away from the good things.
Lene: Somewhere where there were no temptations!

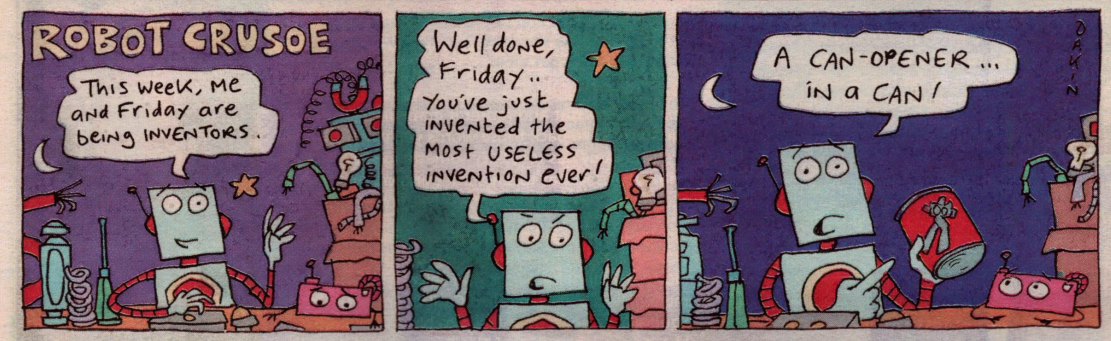
How did you feel when you heard the finished album?
René: We were all very quiet and we sat through the whole thing.
Søren: Of course, we all knew the songs but we were listening to the mix and the order. It felt extremely good and we just made two minor changes.

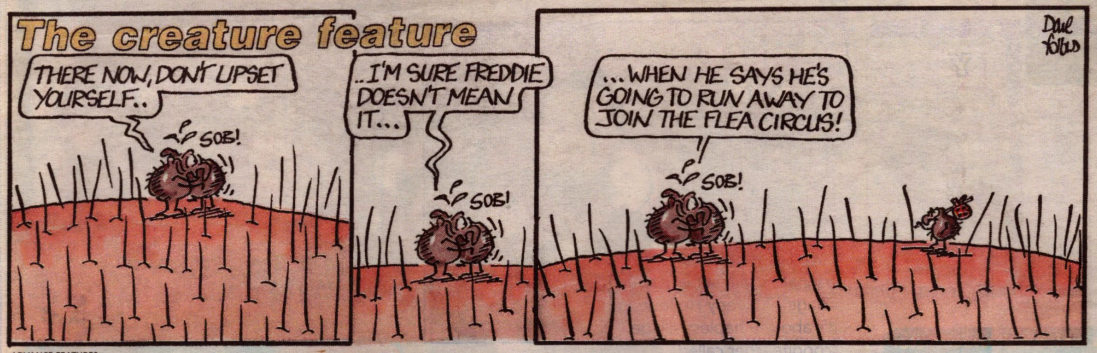
L-R: Claus, Lene, Søren and René

The single, Cartoon Heroes, is out tomorrow!

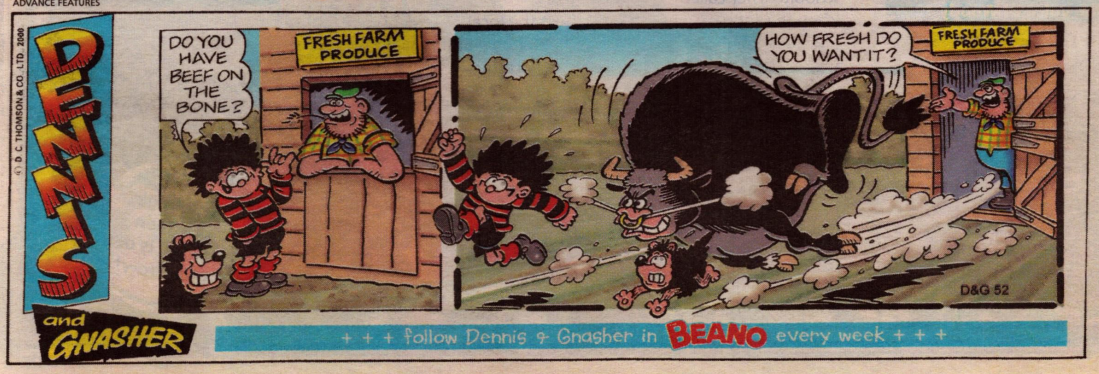
PICTURES: TAR ©EMI RECORDS, ANDY TAN, PA, EUGENE ADEBARI







ADVANCE FEATURES



NEXT WEEK in FUNDAY

PICTURE TONY BUCKINGHAM

Funday laces up its skates and whizzes down the tracks for a backstage look at the mega musical Starlight Express

We want photos of family and friends who you think would be spellbinding as Harry Potter characters!

Our verdict on the now-opened BA London Eye

FUZZY FACE ANSWERS
1 J from Five. 2 Roy from Vengaboys. 3 George Michael.

Whoops! Squirt causes more mayhem next week!

CREEPY CREATOR

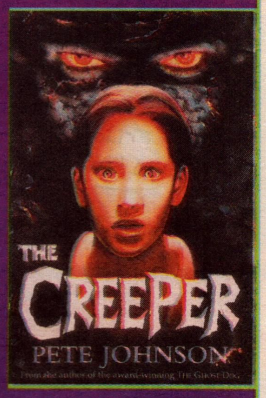
The Creeper is a horrific creature that comes to life through a cassette tape. Paul Wray dares to ask author Pete Johnson about his latest tale of terror.

How did the idea for The Creeper come about?
I got the idea from my sister. She has two children, aged three and five, and they had a cassette tape. One night my sister heard a voice talking downstairs. So, she crept down – which was very brave of her – and as she reached the bottom she heard this voice say, "I hope you enjoy yourself". It scared the life out of her! Somehow, the story tape had turned itself on. The same thing happened the next night. To this day, she doesn't know how it started to play!

The story is set at Halloween, what sort of things did you used to get up to at Halloween?
We had an old shed in the garden and I'd invite my friends over and we'd tell each other spooky stories in the shed. I once made up a story that, on Halloween night, the road outside my house was haunted – it was so good that none of my friends wanted to walk home!

Have you ever listened to an audio tape that has frightened you?
I remember old stories on the radio when I was 11 or 12 that were scary. There was one called Gaslight which was about a woman whose husband tries to drive her mad. Listening to radio plays means you have to picture the story in your mind, which is a lot more scary than actually seeing it. They're very atmospheric.

The main character in the story is Lucy – how do you decide whether the central character is going to be a boy or a girl?
For this book I wanted to have Lucy and Amy at its centre, since I'd never written about a girl's friendship before. I remember that my sister's friendships were very intense. Girls tended to have one best friend that they shared everything with, while boys just had a group of mates they hung around with.



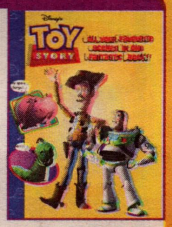
Like Lucy, have you ever regretted something that you have said to a best friend?
Yes, I've got quite a hot temper and sometimes I blurt things out and regret it immediately. But you can never take back those words you've said. In The Creeper, Amy has told Lucy something very personal and Lucy uses that to say something very hurtful. It's the worst betrayal and it's very hard to forgive that.

Lucy buys The Creeper tape from a second-hand store, have you ever bought anything second-hand?
I love second-hand places that sell old books or music. There's a place called Cecil Court, off Leicester Square in London, that I love to browse around. I based the beginning of The Creeper on there. You always hope you'll find something exciting or unique.

It's Valentine's Day tomorrow, would you ever write a love story?
I already have, it's called Ten Hours To Live and it's a love story from a boy's point of view. In Belgium, it's been nominated for the children's book of the year!

The Zone

Woody goodies!

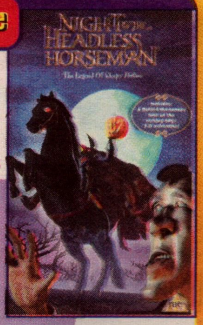


Woody, Buzz Lightyear and Mr Potato Head are back with some new faces in the better-than-the-original Toy Story 2. Poor Woody has been kidnapped by a ruthless toy collector and it's up to Buzz and the gang to save him before he's shipped off to a toy museum in Japan! Egmont Children's Books has released fantastic graphic novels of both Toy Story films and we have 15 sets of Toy Story and Toy Story 2 books to give away.

To enter, tell us which Hollywood actor provides the voice of Woody.

Mark your entry TOY STORY and send it, with your name and membership number, to the competition address on page 3.

Ghastly ghostie



Spooky goings on in a small town that hosts a ghost will definitely have you on the edge of your seat. Night of the Headless Horseman (£9.99, from 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment) is an animated film set in the village of Sleepy Hollow. It's about a hapless village schoolteacher called Ichabod Crane who has to put to rest the local ghost – a knight who lost his head in battle – and take on the local bully as well. Hollywood stars Luke Perry and Tia Carrere provide the voices and the tape also includes behind-the-scenes footage. Our 30 winners will each get a copy of the film.

To enter, tell us which high school TV soap starred Luke Perry.

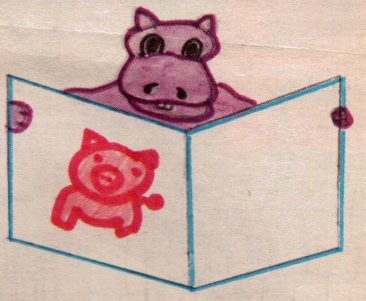
Mark your entry HORSEMAN and send it, with your name and membership number, to the competition address, on page 3.

Zone mail

Hello! My name is Maalini Patel and last year I won the Creme Egg competition in which I won my weight in Creme Eggs. I have been feasting on them ever since and I am really pleased that I won because I adore Creme Eggs! It was really cool to win the competition and I'd like to thank you. My friends enjoyed them as much as I did too!
Maalini Patel, 11, Kent

Zone mail

I think The Funday Times is great, I collect it every week. I just wanted to send you a picture of Henry Hippo reading the Funday Times and also Percy Piglet. I am one of your greatest fans.
Hannah Samoon, 11, Surrey



FC FUN

You can e-mail us at: funday.times@sunday-times.co.uk or write to us. Send a picture, funny photo or story to: The FC Zone, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU7 7GX. Everyone who appears in the FC Zone will get either this cool Power Rangers in Space Galactic Rover or a Betty Spaghetty from Bandai. You can mix and match Betty and her friends to create zillions of trendy outfits, while the Power Rangers in Space Futuristic Deluxe Rover is out of this world!

Check out page 11 next week for our verdict on the coolest new books

THE FUNDAY TIMES

sport

Matt Perry

England's rugby players return to action next week when they take on France in one of the eagerly anticipated games in the Six Nations Championship. England need a victory if they are going to win the title, but they will have to be on top form to win in Paris, and so will full-back Matt Perry. Matt might be one of the youngest players in the team, but he is also one of the best – and when he plays well, so do his team.

- Matt is 23 years old, but he is already an established member of the team with 26 caps
- Although England didn't do well in last year's World Cup, Matt is remembered for his brilliant tackle on New Zealand superstar Jonah Lomu
- He was born in Bath, and still plays for the city's club. His dad also played for the team
- Although he plays at full-back for England, Matt is also a very talented fly-half
- He once took part in a modelling assignment – but says he only did it as a joke!

sport news

Rome rejoices

For a country usually obsessed with football, Italy was celebrating after its rugby team produced an amazing shock in the Six Nations Championship. Tournament newcomers Italy beat the reigning champions Scotland, despite few giving them much of a chance. The new boys battled long and hard, and eventually thrashed Scotland 34-20 in Rome, with the inspirational Diego Dominguez kicking 29 points.

Court in trouble

Britain's tennis stars face a battle to stay in the top division after losing their latest Davis Cup match. The team, led by Tim Henman but missing the injured Greg Rusedski, lost 4-1 against the Czech Republic and now face a tough relegation play-off to keep their place in the world group. Good luck lads.

Wenger's wake-up

Arsene Wenger reckons the Premiership race is over for Arsenal – even though there are three months of the season still left! The Gunners crashed to an embarrassing 2-1 defeat against strugglers Bradford City, and the French boss said the points gap between United and Arsenal is too big. "We play in England, not dreamland," admitted a sad Arsene.

MUG SHOTS

Can you recognise the four Premier League players that make up our fantasy footballer?

Answers: 1 Roy Keane, 2 Frank Lebeouf, 3 David Ginola, 4 Alan Shearer.

PICTURES: REUTERS, PA, ALLSPORT

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Try as they might, no other kids' paper beats Funday Times sport!